

E 182

.R87

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00002736615









Sketch of the Life and Services of
Vice Admiral Stephen C. Roman,
U. S. Navy.

Read before The Ohio Commandery of the
Loyal Legion

April 6, 1910,

by



S. C. Ayres, M. D.,

Former ¹¹Prevet Captain and Assistant
Surgeon U. S. Volunteers.

Gift
Palm Beach
JUN 2 1910





VICE ADMIRAL STEPHEN C. ROWAN, U. S. NAVY.

E180.
1787



Sketch of the Life and Services of Vice Admiral STEPHEN. C. ROWAN, U. S. NAVY



BY S. C. AYRES, M. D.,

Former Brevet Captain and Asst. Surg. U. S. Vols.

During the Civil War, only two naval officers reached the high rank of Vice Admiral in our Navy. One of these was D. D. Porter who became Admiral on the death of Admiral Farregut, and the other was Stephen C. Rowan, who was made Vice Admiral by *selection* when Porter was promoted to Farregut's rank. The subject of this sketch was born in Ireland, December 25, 1808. His father came to this country when his son was only a few years old, and bought property in Westmoreland Co., Pa. A few years later Rowan came out to Piqua, Ohio, and was employed as clerk in a store there. He entered Miami University in 1825 and February 1, 1826, was appointed Midshipman in the Navy, by the Hon. Wm. McLean, M. C., father of Colonel Nat McLean, U. S. A., whom some of you will remember. His first cruise of nearly four years was in the *Vincennes*, when she made the circuit of the globe, the first time it had ever been accomplished by our Navy. In the Spring of 1836, he was promoted to Lieutenant and ordered to the line-of-battle ship *Deleware* and cruised for nearly six years on the Coast of Brazil and in the Mediterranean. He was afloat nearly all of his time during his first twenty years in the Navy. From '44 to '45 he served on the *Ontario* and from '45 to

'48, he was executive officer of the Cyane on the Pacific Coast. His timely arrival there was fortunate as he was actively engaged in the war with Mexico until it ended. It was in the conflict with Mexico that Rowan had his first experience in actual war. It was there that he received his first baptism of fire and a training which helped to develop those qualities which made him so conspicuous as an officer in the more serious conflict with the South in the early sixties. Let us for a moment glance at the situation on the Pacific Coast in 1846. Upper and lower California belonged to Mexico. There was a Governor, but the Franciscan monks in the various missions which they had established in the beautiful valleys were the real power. Mexico had too much trouble of her own near home, since she threw off the yoke of Spain, to pay much attention to California, which in a commercial way was not as much an asset as a liability. The priests had converted and in a measure tamed and partly civilized the stupid and lazy Indians which they found on and near the Coast. Texas had been lost to Mexico by revolt and had been admitted into the Union in 1845.

There were on the Coast about two thousand pioneer settlers from the States, with some English and Irish. A colony of Russians had located in the northern part, but between the settlers and Roman Church which practically controlled the land, there was no bond of sympathy. Many of these settlers were discharged sailors and soldiers, hunters, trappers and adventurers, who loved the wild life this region afforded. Our Government looked with jealous eyes on this beautiful land which Fremont had visited twice previously and was now exploring for the third time. His was a scientific expedition, with instructions not to break the peace. He had a band of about sixty hardy fellows, pathfinders like himself, well mounted and well armed with Kit Carson as guide.

Our fleet on the Pacific was commanded by Commodore Sloat. They had visited the various ports, San Francisco, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Monterey, Mazatlan and Guaymas. From 1845 to 1848, Rowan was executive officer of the Cyane which joined the Pacific squadron on December 24, 1845. The squadron was composed of five vessels, the Savannah being the flag ship.

Rumours of the impending trouble between the United States and

Mexico were current and the ships were put in order for the coming conflict.

Not long after this Lieutenant Gillespie of the Marine Corps joined the Cyane. He had secret orders for Captain Fremont, from Washington. The Cyane did not reach Monterey until April 18th, and in the meantime Fremont had moved north, but Gillespie overtook him and delivered the message to him.

An English fleet also was on the Pacific Coast under Commodore Seymour, who was looking for Great Britain's interests, and watching with jealous eyes every movement of our ships. England suspected American designs on this country, and quietly made counter plots to take possession of the land and hoist the English flag.

This, in a word, was the situation when Fremont arrived in March, 1846, with his exploring party. Pio Pico was the Governor and Castro commanded the army. Fremont applied to Castro for permission to pass beyond the San Joaquin Valley. This was promptly granted, but the promise was treacherously broken, later on, after Fremont had passed the Oregon border. His camp was attacked and four of his men assassinated before the alarm was given. The cowardly and treacherous attack of the Mexicans on Fremont changed the aspect of affairs. He determined to be revenged and to attack General Castro and drive him out of the country. Great excitement prevailed among the settlers, and volunteers flocked to his camp. He organized a battalion, took possession of San Francisco and started in pursuit of Castro, who had retreated to Los Angeles.

Commander Sloat who was in command of this fleet, was placed in a delicate position. He did not want to break the peace, but he learned that the English Consul was plotting to take possession of the land in the name of England, and the Catholic Powers there, were agreeable to the change.

When Sloat heard of what Fremont had done, he decided to act at once without instructions from Washington, not knowing that orders to this effect were on the way. He had orders from President Polk, to observe the relations of peace existing between the two countries, but many events had transpired since he had left home and communications were slow in those days. He was not aware that war had actually been declared and money voted to carry it on, and that General Zachary Taylor was then at the mouth of the Rio Grand

River. It was a critical moment and something had to be done without direct orders from Washington. A plot had been formed to declare the independence of California and appeal to England for protection.

In view of the situation Commodore Sloat decided to take a bold step and accordingly on the seventh of July, 1846, he landed 250 Marines under Captain Mervine and Lieutenant Rowan of the *Cyane* and took possession of Monterey, in the name of the United States. The stars and stripes were raised amid the booming of cannon and the cheers of the people. A proclamation was read declaring California a part of the United States. Within a few days the flag was raised at San Francisco, Sonoma and Sutters Mill. After taking possession of Monterey, Lieutenant Rowan was ordered to land with the crew of the *Cyane* and build a fort. This was novel work for the Jackies, but they did it well and built a strong block-house with pickets. The successful accomplishment of this piece of field engineering so exceptional in the experience of a naval officer was a source of pride to him as long as he lived and he referred to it with much satisfaction. A few days later the man of the hour, the man who was to decide the future of California, the man of aggressive instincts, who grasped the situation, arrived. He combined in an eminent degree, the qualities of a naval commander, with those of a military leader. To Commodore Stockton more than to anyone else, are we indebted for the subjugation of California and the complete defeat of the Mexicans.

As soon as Commodore Sloat had sailed, Commodore Stockton assumed the Governorship and supreme command of the land and naval forces. He promoted Fremont to Major and mustered his troops into the service. Four days later they embarked on the *Cyane* for San Diego. No resistance was offered. Rowan in his report to the U. S. Naval Institute says, "Landing with a Marine guard and a few sailors, I marched up to the town a few miles away, and, having read the proclamation, hoisted the flag without opposition." Moving rapidly, Stockton sailed for San Pedro and succeeded in capturing the *Pueblo* of Los Angeles without a fight—only to lose it later on, and have to re-capture.

It was not until the 20th of August, that they received official notice that war had been declared with Mexico, although, it had practically been done in January. The *Cyane* now sailed for Mazatlan, to

establish a blockade and captured three prizes on the way. Hearing of two gun boats on the Coast, they left immediately for Guaymas. Rowan says, "I opened on the town, a single broadside silenced the enemy, I fired a shell myself so near their largest field piece that the crew went skampering off.

In the meantime Los Angeles had been taken by the Mexicans and Lieutenant Gillespie driven out. Stockton now at San Diego made plans to advance on Los Angeles and re-capture it. Rowan was assigned to the command of the 500 marines and seamen. In addition to these there was a company of dragoons and one of riflemen. General Kearney had command over all the troops while Stockton had supreme command. The march to the Pueblo of Los Angeles was a very hard one, they had no horses and had to use oxen to haul their wagons. They drove their cattle for food and during part of the march formed a hollow square to protect them, as well as their wagons, from the enemy who were harrassing them, well mounted on excellent horses. At San Gabriel on June 8th, they had a fight with the Mexicans who had made a stand there and also on the next day at the Mesa, they had a sharp encounter with the enemy, but drove him back at every point. In this fight Rowan was wounded, but kept his place until it was all over. On the next day a flag of truce came from the Pueblo, offering to surrender on certain conditions. These were accepted and our troops took possession of Los Angeles. This was the most important point gained, for with the capitol of California in our hands, the Mexicans lost heart and failed to organize any large body of troops afterwards. One of the most interesting incidents in the war on the Coast was the rescue of Lieutenant Heywood, who had been landed with a small force of men at San Jose in November, '47. His camp was surrounded by the Mexicans, his provisions were almost exhausted and he was in desperate straits. The Cyane landed her entire force, and under Captain Du Pont and Lieutenant Rowan attacked the Mexicans. The fight was short and severe; with a rush the sailors went to the relief of their comrades who had been besieged for weeks and soon rescued them.

Between the end of the Mexican war and the beginning of the Civil War in '61, he served twice on ordnance duty at the N. Y. Navy Yard, cruised three years on the ship Relief and was in charge of the receiving ship North Carolina for three years.

In the latter part of '60, when the country was filled with rumors of the impending conflict he was waiting orders. Being convinced that there was trouble ahead, he asked for service afloat, and in January, '61, was put in command of the Pawnee, whose Commander being a Southern man had resigned. He was ordered to Washington and his ship was the strongest protection which the Capitol had in those dark days of the outbreak of the rebellion.

The services of Admiral Rowan during the Civil War were the crowning acts of a man who up to that time had an admirable record. His service in the Mexican War prepared him for larger things than he had ever accomplished. His undoubted loyalty to the flag in our countrys time of greatest need, made him one to whom the government could entrust any responsible service. The Secretary of the Navy a rebel sympathiser in poor weak old Buchanan's cabinet, had been scattering our ships to foreign ports, so that they could not be available. In the Home Squadron there were only twelve vessels, and only four of them in New York, and one, the Pawnee, in Washington, of the other eight, four were at Pensacola, one at Very Cruz. Our entire fleet consisted of 42 vessels and of these, many were lying in various navy yards undergoing repairs.

The war actually began on the sea coast at one of our most important ports Charleston, S. C., and after it was on, the Navy had a tremendous contract to close and guard our coast line, extending from Alexandria to the Rio Grande River, a distance of 6000 miles, including bays and inlets with 185 harbor and river openings. This does not include the work the Navy had to do on the Mississippi and other rivers. Think of what a task this was and how much depended on this arm of the service! Had the Navy not actually maintained a blockade on the Coast which inter-national law could respect, we would have had interference by at least two of the most powerful nations of Europe, which were not showing a friendly spirit toward the North.

Admiral Belnap says, "that had it not been for the splendid co-operation of the Navy and the Marine Corps with the Union Armies in the field, there never would have been any surrender at Appomattox." We who saw only land fighting, do not fully appreciate the value of the Navy. The Confederacy received its supplies and munitions of war thro the Atlantic ports from their sympathizing friends

on the other side, and when a Naval victory was gained and their war supplies cut off, it was most keenly felt. Had it not been for the work of the Navy, the power of the Confederacy would never have been broken.

Many of the Naval officers in '61, were disloyal to their flag and resigned as soon as their States seceded. This crippled the service very much, for the government bought, built, armed and equipped a large number of vessels and had to look to younger and inexperienced men to command them.

The Secretary of the Navy had also been accumulating guns and munitions of war in the Southern ports, knowing full well that they would be available to the Southern cause when the crash came. On March 4, '61, there were only 207 men in all the ports and receiving ships on the Atlantic Coast. We had ships and valuable munitions of war, but the administration was slow to act. The authorities at Washington were warned of the danger of delay, in not guarding and protecting the Norfolk Navy Yard, but nothing was done. Everyone was afraid of wounding the sensitive feelings of the South, by making any demonstration which would have the slightest appearance of an act of hostility toward them. All the while they were plotting, plotting how they could cripple the government. In a spasm of hysteria, the government ordered the navy yard at Norfolk to be burned. The buildings were consumed and the port deserted by our ships. But much property of the greatest value was not consumed. Among other things twelve hundred large guns, the best the Navy had. These were uninjured and Admiral Porter, says that we met them everywhere in future engagements on the Coast and even down on the Mississippi River.

In the same way the disloyal Secretary of War Floyd sent the little army we then had as far as possible from the Coast. Our soldiers were scattered over Utah, New Mexico, the Indian and Washington Territories, Oregon and Texas. The government had practically neither Navy or Army which was available when Sumter was fired on. There was scarcely a Corporal's guard to protect Washington. At this very moment thousands of men were drilled and armed in the Southern States and ready to march on Washington and take possession of the Capitol.

The Potomac River is the great highway from Washington to the

sea, and one of the first acts of the Confederates was to take possession of it. As early as the last of May '61 they had completed their batteries on Aquia Creek below Washington.

Admiral Porter says that "at the time Mr. Lincoln became President, all of the Southern ports were in possession of the secessionists and were sealed against our ships and open to the blockade runners which immediately began to supply the South with munitions of war." Clothing, food, arms and everything necessary for the Rebel army, thus had free entry until a Navy should be created, which would be able not only to exclude them, but to enable us to regain possession of these ports on the Coast. Want of ships prevented the government from taking possession of these ports on the Atlantic Coast on the shores of Virginia and of North and South Carolina. The administration was slow in getting to work and did not seem to comprehend the value of time. Secretary Wells, instead of acting promptly and taking the initiative, called a board of three naval officers to make a report as to what kind and how many naval vessels should be ordered. In a message he says, "it is for Congress to say whether one or more iron-clad steamers or floating batteries are to be constructed with a view of perfect protection from the effects of present ordnance at short range." It took them six precious weeks to deliberate and at the end of that time they were skeptical as to the utility of iron-clads. They thought that for coast and harbor defence, they would undoubtedly be formidable adjuncts to fortifications on land. As cruising vessels, they were skeptical as to their advantages and ultimate adoption. Their final opinion was that no ship or floating battery, however heavily she may be plated could cope successfully with a properly constructed fortification of masonry. How our views and experience have been revolutionized since '61! Could these fine old Admirals have seen the splendid fleet which Admiral Evans lead out of Hampton Roads about two years ago, what would they say? Could they believe that every doubt which they had about the inefficiency of iron-clads had vanished? Their trust in fortifications of masonry would be shattered, when they learned that one big gun can fire enormous shells a distance of five or ten miles, which weigh as much as a whole broadside would have done in their day.

Plans for the construction of iron-clads were submitted by John Ericsson, of New York, and adopted without delay and the immediate

result was the construction of the Monitor and the New Ironsides. The former was to revolutionize naval fighting and to render useless the wooden ships of every European country. It was to form a model of an iron-clad fighting machine, which by process of evolution has resulted in the wonderful dreadnaughts of the present day.

But six months had now elapsed since the administration came into power, and it had lost valuable time, and valuable territory which it was most important to hold. In the meantime the Confederates had been pushing forward with a zeal and enthusiasm which gave them a great advantage.

The services of Admiral Rowan during the Civil War were on the Potomac River and in the waters of North and South Carolina.

When the Elsworth Zouaves entered Alexandria, May 24th, the Pawnee was there by order of General Scott to cover their landing. In fact before the soldiers had had time to reach the town, Rowan had already sent his executive officer Lieutenant Lowry to demand its surrender and the evacuation of the rebel troops.

The first naval engagement of the war was an attack on the batteries on Aquia Creek, which the rebels had constructed at the terminus of the Richmond & Fredricksburg R. R. on the Potomac River. It occurred on the first day of June. This was the opening gun for the Navy's great work and his ship the Pawnee took part in it. Later on in the same month the Pawnee participated in an attack on Mathias Point farther down the river

The capture of Hatteras Inlet and forts Hatteras and Clark which defended it was one of the most important events during the first year of the war. It was in fact the first important victory the Navy had gained. Hatteras Inlet was the best and most important sea entrance to the inland waters of North Carolina. Its strategic importance was early recognized by the Confederates who erected at its entrance two forts, Hatteras and Clark, mounting 25 and 5 guns respectively, which were garrisoned by about seven hundred men.

The coast of North Carolina from the line of Virginia down to Cape Fear is protected by what the geologists call a barrier beach. It extends like a massive sea wall along nearly the entire length of the State and is the dread of sailors and mariners. Cape Hatteras, Cape Lookout, Cape Fear are places to be dreaded in a storm.

In this enormous sea wall there are openings or inlets into the pro-

tected waters of Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds, which occupy a frontage of nearly one-half of the Old North State. The most important inlet was that of Hatteras. Its capture was accomplished by a combined attack by land and sea.

The troops were commanded by General B. F. Butler and the naval forces by Flag Officer Stringham. On the 26th of August, '61, the fleet and transports with the troops arrived. The troops were landed with difficulty on account of the high surf. On the 28th, the bombardment of the forts began and ships got the range. On the next morning the fleet threw shot and shell into the forts with such energy and accuracy that in three hours they raised the white flag and the inlet was ours. In this engagement Rowan commanded the Pawnee and his ship did good service and aided materially in the defeat of the enemy. This victory with its far reaching effects, sent a thrill of pleasure and hope to the Union troops and particularly to the Navy.

It was of vital importance to capture and hold the waters of North Carolina and a brilliant beginning had been made. In this battle we captured 670 prisoners, 1000 stand of arms and 35 guns. Immediately after the capture of Hatteras Inlet, General Butler went to Washington to report the good news to the President and General Wool. He arrived there after midnight and went immediately to the home of Post Master General Blair. Then he went to the house of Assistant Secretary of War Fox, and told of our victory. It was proposed to go across the street and tell President Lincoln, and they went. This is General Butler's description of the interview: "We went up into Cabinet room, the President was called and when our errand was hinted to him, he immediately came in in his night shirt. Everybody knows how tall Lincoln was, and he seemed very much taller in that garment, and Fox was about five feet nothing. In a few hurried words Fox communicated the news and then he and Lincoln fell into each other arms. That is, Fox put his arms around Lincoln about as high as his hips and Lincoln reached down over him, so that his arms were pretty near the floor, apparently, and thus holding each other they flew around the room once or twice and the night shirt was considerably agitated. The Commanding General was entirely overcome by the scene and lying back on the sofa roared with irresistible merriment." Poor, good, Mr. Lincoln, nothing ever made him hilarious except good news from the front. He did not enjoy that kind of in-

toxication very often and this event was like a ray of sunshine from a dark cloud.

After the capture of Hatteras Inlet, the government was urged to take measures to capture other important strategic points and rebel forts, which had been erected in Pamlico and Albermarle Sounds. These large bodies of water are separated by narrow channels in the midst of which is Roanoke Island. The Confederates early saw the importance of fortifying these channels and constructed three forts on the east side of the island and one on the main land. Mounting in all 32 large guns. They also obstructed the channel by piles and sunken hulks of vessels.

Roanoke Island was the key to Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds, and the government at once made energetic efforts to capture it. It was an attack by land and sea. The troops were commanded by General Burnside and the Naval forces under Admiral Goldsboro with Rowan as next in rank. On the 7th of February, 1862, the vessels advanced and engaged the forts and also the Confederate fleet, which was at the other end of the channel. Firing continued all day and in the meantime the troops were landed and began their march toward the forts. The next day the attack was general by land and sea and resulted in the complete defeat of the rebels and the capture of 2600 men and officers, five forts and 32 guns. It was a great and very important victory. I cannot describe its importance as well as Scharf has done in his history of the Confederate States Navy.

He writes:

“Thus Roanoke Island was lost. It was the key to the rear defences of Norfolk. It unlocked two sounds, eight rivers, four canals, and two railroads. It lodged the Navy in a safe harbor from the storms of Hatteras and gave him a rendezvous and a large and rich range of supplies and the command of the seaboard, from Oregon Inlet to Cape Henry. The Confederate Navy in the sounds of North Carolina was in that action, if not entirely destroyed, dissipated and scattered.”

In this naval battle all of the vessels were placed under command of Rowan. Admiral Goldsboro's ship taking no part in the engagement. It was a brilliant affair, and after it was over, Rowan was commended in the highest terms by the Flag Officer. During the battle at Roanoke Island, the Confederate fleet under command of

Flag Officer Lynch were in the east end of the channel. When the island was captured they retreated to Elizabeth City on the Pasquotunk River, and Rowan with several vessels followed and attacked them. They were found behind Cobbs Point under cover of a fort.

The night before the attack, Rowan called his commanders together and gave them their orders. He told them there were only twenty rounds of ammunition for each gun. He enjoined upon them, not to fire a single shot until the order was given and in order to further economize ammunition, each vessel was to run the enemy down and engage him hand to hand. Our fleet advanced without responding to the shots from the rebel fort. On they came silently but steadily. When within three-quarters of a mile of the fort, Rowan gave the signal, "Dash at the enemy." And then they went at full speed, over obstructions and sunken torpedoes and right for the rebel ships. Each ship went for one of the Confederate ships, and in fifteen minutes five of their six ships were either captured or destroyed. The fort was deserted as soon as our fleet passed it, as it was then defenceless. It was a brilliant affair and the new tactics adopted confused and disconcerted the enemy.

An act of heroism occurred on the Valley City which Rowan records and which is worthy of special mention. A shell penetrated the magazine of the Valley City and set fire to the berth deck. John Davis, gunners mate was serving powder from an open barrel of power. Seeing the danger he sat down on the barrel and there remained until the fire was extinguished, thereby preventing an explosion. He was honorably mentioned by Lieutenant Chaplin and also by Rowan and was promoted by the Secretary of the Navy. He received a medal of honor, the first which was given during the war.

After the battle between the Monitor and Merrimac on the 9th of March, 1862. Admiral Goldsboro went to Fortress Monroe, leaving Rowan in command of the Sounds of North Carolina.

The next important movement was on March 14th against New Berne, a strongly fortified city on on the Neuse River and the second important city in the State. Here as at Roanoke Island there was a combined attack of land and naval forces, the latter under the personal command of Rowan. The troops were under Generals Reno, Foster and Park, with Burnside in supreme command. The forts were located along the banks of the river at intervals. As usual the Navy

advanced, shelling the forts. The channel was obstructed in two places by piling and sunken hulks and the upper one by a row of 30 torpedoes, containing 200 pounds of power each. In an unofficial letter from Rowan to Goldsboro, he says, "As we were going toward the obstructions, the old pilot said, you must stop or you will all be blown up, but I said we must take some risk and I hoped their machines would not go off and sure enough they did not." If he had only said, "Damn the torpedoes," as Farragut did two years later, he would have immortalized himself. Giving orders, "Follow my motions," he went thro the obstructions with his flag ship, the Delaware, the others following. Three of his ships were slightly injured. The troops did brilliant work charging the forts and pushing on rapidly. The battle resulted in a complete route of the Confederates. By noon Rowan's flag ship was at the wharf in the city of New Berne. In this fight we captured nine forts, mounting 41 guns, two miles of intrenchment, 19 field pieces, 300 prisoners and 1000 stand of arms with an immense amount of stores, ammunition and cotton. This practically ended the contest, in the sounds of North Carolina. The Union forces had accomplished a most important work and the Confederates had been crippled both on sea and land. In what was accomplished much credit is due to the hearty co-operation of General Rush C. Hawkins who commanded the land forces in several expeditions. Privateers could no longer carry on their operations in these waters and all had been accomplished within a few weeks.

The most trying and laborious duty performed by Commodore Rowan was during the siege of Charleston. This began early in April, 1863, but it was not until July that he was ordered to command the New Ironsides.

Before speaking of his services, let us for a moment look at the New Ironsides. She was one of the remarkable ships of the war and is to-day historic. At this time she was probably the strongest vessel afloat. She was 220 feet in length, of 60 feet beam, 23 foot depth of hold, drew 16 feet of water and her greatest speed was eight knots. Her armor consisting of plates of rolled iron $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, which extended over 178 feet of her length. Her battery consisted of fourteen 11 inch Dahlgren, smooth-bores and two 150 pounder Parrott rifles of 8 inch caliber. Her spar deck, her weak point, was covered by sand bags and over this raw hides were spread. These gave out a

horrid odor, which was not ameliorated by the coating of tallow which was theoretically intended to deflect the expected projectiles. In the first attack on Sumter, April 7th, she was commanded by Commodore Turner.

Admiral DuPont, decided that the fort could not be taken by a purely naval force and so it was arranged that General Gilmore should co-operate with the army under his command. The next attack was made July 18th, Rowan commanding the Ironsides.

Charleston harbor was very strongly protected by her natural location and also by a formidable line of forts, batteries and earth works, which lined the channel on both sides. The city lying between the Cooper and Ashley Rivers was abundantly protected on both sides as well as on the main land. On the ocean front, on Morris Island, were Batteries Wagner and Gregg, across the channel was Fort Moultrie, batteries Beauregard and Battery Bee. Between these two points and a little nearer the city was Fort Sumter, while farther up were Forts Johnson and Ripley and Castle Pinckney and others. To get into the harbor of Charleston would be to get into a circle of fire as was very aptly said. Dahlgren succeeded DuPont and an attack by land and sea was ordered by the Secretary of the Navy. It is not the intention of this paper to discuss this great struggle, but to confine it to the part in which Captain Rowan participated. The bombardment of the various forts began on the 18th of July, 1863, and continued until the 8th of September. During this time the Ironsides engaged Fort Wagner 14 times, Fort Sumter 4 times, Fort Gregg 5 times and Fort Moultrie twice. On the first day of the attack, the Ironsides fired 805 shot and shells. During this siege she fired 4429 shots and shells. The attack lasted fifty-two days and the Ironsides had her guns in action during twenty-five days of this time. She was struck 164 times and yet not a shot from the rebel batteries penetrated her armor. She was injured in her vulnerable and unprotected portions fore and aft, had the shutters to her port holes shot away and her joints sprung in different places and her plating indented, but her armor was never pierced by a rebel shot. This fact is either a compliment to her iron plating or a reflection on the enemys shot. Of the Ironsides, Admiral Porter says—"The handsome manner in which her gallant Commander Captain S. C. Rowan handled her and took her into action always elicited the applause of the fleet. There was no vessel the

enemy so heartily dreaded as the Ironsides. Her well drilled crew and expert gunners made her anything but welcome when she brought her broadsides to bear upon any of the forts.

Many attempts were made to destroy her. On the 7th of April, 1862, she stood for an hour directly over a torpedo containing 2000 pounds of powder. It was to have been exploded by electricity, but the current would not work. It was discovered later on, that one of the wires had been severed by an ordnance wagon and so she escaped. On the 5th of October, 1863, a daring attempt to destroy her by a torpedo boat was made. The torpedo boat or "David" as it was called, was 50 feet long, 8 feet in width and 6 feet in depth, shaped like a cigar and had great speed. It carried on the end of a spar projecting from its bow, a torpedo. The attack on the Ironsides was very skilfully managed. It advanced very rapidly and the torpedo exploded under the water near her hull, throwing up an immense column of water, which deluged the ship. She was shaken from stem to stern by the force of the explosion and some damage done to her, but she was not disabled. It was a narrow escape, however, and convinced our naval Commanders, that the Confederates were doing more aggressive work in the construction of torpedo boats than we were. General Beauregard looked upon the Ironsides as their most dangerous antagonist and he determined to destroy her if possible and so raise the blockade.

Scharf says—

"Most of the boat expeditions had been sent out with a view to discovering the possibility of a torpedo attack on the New Ironsides, which was more troublesome to Fort Wagner than all the Monitors combined, her quick firing broadsides of 11 inch shell guns being far more annoying than the slower discharges from the turret vessels."

In June, '64, after eleven months constant service on the Ironsides, Admiral Rowan asked to be relieved as the duty was beginning to impair his health. He took his ship to Philadelphia and there had a much needed and well earned respite from sea duty. This ended his active service during the war. From January, 1861, till June, 1864, a period of three years and a half he was in command all the time, filling every position to which he was assigned with credit to himself and the Navy. His valuable services were not unappreciated. July 11, 1862, President Lincoln recommended a vote of thanks of Con-

gress to Commander Rowan "for distinguished services in the waters of North Carolina and particularly in the capture of New Berne, being in chief command of the naval forces." On February 19, '63, the President nominated Rowan to be a Commodore in the Navy on the active list from February 7th, 1863. On July 26, 1866, he was promoted to Rear Admiral by *selection*. President Grant nominated him to be Vice Admiral on August, 1870, by *selection* also. This was while he was in command of the Asiatic Squadron. The promotion was made while he was at sea on the return voyage and he was not aware of it until he reached New York Harbor. Admiral Rodley D. Evans, who was an officer on Rowan's flag ship, the *Piscataqua* at the time says in his "Sailors Log," published in 1892. "As we entered the Narrows, the *Guerrier* was made outside bound for Brazil. She saluted us with seventeen guns, which was the first intimation we had that Admiral Rowan had been made Vice Admiral. Our officers and crew were wild with delight and cheered until the Admiral showed himself on deck. It was a splendid reward for his magnificent conduct during the Civil War and made solely on his merits. At the time it was done he was at sea, out of reach of anything like political influence, and not even where he could be communicated with. Once in our history the man who deserved it was made Vice Admiral." After his return from his last cruise, he was in command of the Brooklyn Navy Yard from '72 to '76 Port Admiral till '77. He filled various positions until '83, when he went to Washington and served as Chairman of the Light House Board. This position he held until 1889, when he voluntarily retired. He passed away the next year March 31, 1890, in the eighty-second year of his age, having served in the Navy sixty-four years. He died full of years and full of honors and he deserved them all. Personally he was very popular with his fellow officers and with the sailors. The latter affectionately called him "Paddy Rowan." His excellent judgement and unquestioned bravery inspired confidence in all who came in contact with him. He was very appreciative of any act of bravery on the part of any subordinate and gave unstinted praise wherever it was deserved.

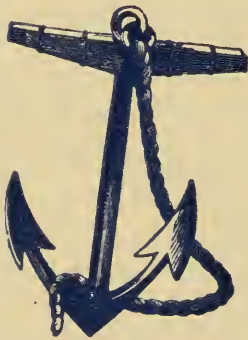
Admiral T. H. Stevens (1886 *Evening Star*) in relation to the work done by Rowan in North Carolina says, "in reviewing this series of successes and victories of paramount value to the Union cause, we

cannot fail to recognize the fine skill, untiring energy, cool and tempered judgment; quick perception and dash of Rowan, which fully established his claims to rank with the leading Commanders of the day. No grass grew under his keel. No victory was gained until all its fruits were fully garnered. While there was work to be done, he rested not, nor did he allow others to rest."

In 1864, the Sanitary Commission of New York gave a beautiful sword to the most popular naval officer. The selection fell to Admiral Rowan. This sword is now loaned to the library in Piqua, which Mr. J. G. Schmidlapp, our fellow citizen, built in honor of his native city. A monument to Admiral Rowan was erected in Piqua by his generosity also. It was dedicated on October 13, 1909, with becoming and interesting ceremonies. The monument consists of a 10 inch Rodman gun, resting on a block of granite, on which are inscribed the principal battles in which he participated. May we not hope that, in the not distant future, a more fitting monument may be erected to his memory in the City of Washington, where he spent the latter years of his life?



Monument erected at Piqua, O., in honor of Vice Admiral Rowan by
J. G. Schmidlapp. Dedicated October 13, 1909.



H 19 89 .





HECKMAN
ANDRY INC.



DEC 88

N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA 46962

